With a slew of new buildings underway, a mid-career survey at the Art Institute of Chicago, and a textile exhibition at Cooper Hewitt, David Adjaye seems to be the architect of the moment. But in 2006, when installation artist Isaac Julien introduced

As one of the fastest growing cities in the United States this year, Dallas is putting its hard-earned dollars right into the ground with several new buildings: A twisted, seven-story

Arguably no other American city is as closely linked to music as Nashville. But until recently its downtown had no outdoor concert venue—just an endless string of honky-tanks.

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Reading Rainbow
When Chicago’s newest public library branch opened on August 29, neighbors poured through the door like they were carrying overdue books. More than 6,500 people attended the opening day of the new Chicago Public Library building at 2100 South Wentworth Avenue in the city’s Chinatown neighborhood—a new record. Crowds have kept up since, attracting about 1,500 visitors per day.

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As our editor-in-chief Bill Menking observed in a recent editorial of his own, this fall marks some big changes for The Architect’s Newspaper. We’re both widening and deepening our coverage of architecture, design, planning, and everything in between by hiring sharp new reporters and editors who will continue to make our independent upstart of a paper one of the essential resources of the industry from coast to coast. I, however, will no longer be serving as its Midwest Editor. After three and a half years manning the helm from Chicago, I’ve left the city and the post to continue my freelance career from Boston.

I’ve had the privilege of covering Chicago and the Midwest during an exciting time for its architecture and design scene. We’ve followed the emergence of wood as a tall-building material, the thorny politics of midcentury modern preservation, the rebirth of urban neighborhoods and downtowns, from Lincoln to Cleveland, and countless other stories, large and small. In the editor-in-chief’s home base of Chicago, it’s by all accounts the most active time for new development in recent memory, with at least a dozen high-profile projects in the pipeline or recently completed. These projects promise to shape the future of the urban experience in one of the nation’s great cities. Matt Messner, the incoming Midwest Editor, who trained at the University of Illinois at Chicago’s MAD-Crit program, will lead our continuing coverage of this exciting time in Chicago, tapping and expanding our network of freelancers in other hotspots of design around the Midwest, from the Twin Cities to Detroit to Louisville, Kentucky.

Kicking off this month, the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial may be the poster child for the renewed international interest in Chicago’s riotous cultural scene. But that vibrancy has always typified Chicago, whether or not observers from afar were keyed into it. I could use this page to cheer on the design community here—rightly) aspire to requires little creativity to self-annihilation, and architects have now delivered by the Chicago Architecture Biennial, must leave lay-visitors lay-vestigial. If the State of the Art of Architecture Biennial Exhibition, must leave lay-visitors lay-vestigial. If the State of what art?

Second City Switch-Up

The State of what art?

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By converting an adjoining parking lot into a surrounding 100-square-block watershed. This 2.5-acre park will be net positive for both energy and water productivity in partnership with the Salk Institute for Biological Studies of La Jolla, California. The standard from Portland-based Bio-Diversity experts, ENR’s Salk Institute project is part of the company’s larger plan to use natural and LED lighting—also a net positive, McDowell hopes, for his staff’s physical and mental well being.

“By converting an adjoining parking lot into a xericaped community park, BNIM plans not only to add a precious amount of public space to Kansas City’s urban core but also improve its water table by redirecting millions of gallons of stormwater to the park. BNIM is partnering with the city government to provide information on the impact of this and other buildings in the downtown infrastructure.

McDowell credited city manager Troy Schulte with making the building’s greenwash system possible. City waterlines will run through concrete slots in the building through heating and cooling loops that will return the water to the street at or near the temperature it entered. All this, and a striking white facade of reclaimed wood shingles, makes 1640 Baltimore a thoroughly modern counterpoint to the renovated 1956 TVA corporate headquarters building that is now the home to BNIM and architect Barkley Inc. The irony is that 1640 Baltimore is much older. It dates back to the early 20th century, when it sported a terra cotta facade. The cladding was added in the 1970s, said McDowell.

BNIM’s new offices will be net positive for energy and water.

Clean & Green
SALT LAKE CITY AIRPORT ADDITION

Utah’s largest city wants visitors to know from the moment their planes touch down that the state is a natural wonderland—its new $1.8 billion airport terminal is designed to emphasize the region’s mountainous splendor.

When it opens in 2020, the Salt Lake City Airport’s expansion will consolidate all three separate terminals into one three-story terminal, boost the number of gates to 73, add 3,600 parking spaces, and be serviced by a new light rail station. It will be among the world’s most sustainable airports, aiming for LEED Gold certification with an ambition toward becoming the nation’s first “net-zero” facility where as much electricity is generated as is used.

The five-year plan unveiled this fall illustrates a unified airport terminal experience designed by HOK’s Aviation + Transportation division. “One of the great things about flying into Salt Lake City is flying into the valley between the mountain ranges on the approach to the airport,” Robert Chicas, a director at HOK, said in a statement. “This new terminal will be an extension of that experience.”

Nature will be at the core of the design. Expanses of glass will flood the terminal with light and views of the distant mountains rising from the flat topography of the airfield. The terminal’s color scheme will take cues from the natural landscape with its red-tinted rock and icy blue winter skies.

The terminal is organized around a dramatic space called “The Canyon.” Walls of the oversize room will be clad with sinuous abstract bas-reliefs illuminated by changing colors. The new entry procession will be streamlined with added security checkpoints, a new public terminal space with additional shops, and improved baggage claim areas with an eye toward reducing pedestrian congestion.

Architect: HOK
Client: Salt Lake City Airport Board
Location: Salt Lake City, UT
Completion Date: 2020

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Travelers passing through Chicago’s Ogilvie Transportation Center have a new reason to look forward to their morning commutes. The Eastman Egg Company, a restaurant serving up breakfast sandwiches and craft coffee, has nestled in a cory, second-floor corner of the Helmut Jahn–designed building.

The 1,100-square-foot space is intimate and inviting. Designed by Woodhouse Tinucci Architects, it reinforces the culinary philosophy of the restaurant’s founders. “We set out to give people a great option that is also fast,” said cofounder Hunter Swartz. “We’re able to do that because of how we source our food and design our spaces.” Like the ingredients used in their signature sandwiches, which come from local farms and bakeries, most of the restaurant’s interior finishes were manufactured in and around Chicago.

Raw industrial materials like hot-rolled steel, laminated plywood, and concrete are juxtaposed with the pristine white walls and elegant cove-lit surfaces behind the coffee bar. Contrasting materials, interlocking shapes and planes, and shifting ceiling heights converge to create a dynamic space that feels much larger than it is. An L-shaped cutout in the back wall creates views into the kitchen, and stools at the coffee bar promote social interaction between customers and Eastman staff.

“The goal was to create an integrated experience,” explained Nathan Bowman, project architect. It does exactly that.

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EAVESDROP > THE EDITORS

BLOWN OVER

The number of projects in the Chicago Cultural Center right now is a bit dizzying, but we can only imagine what the place was like during the installation. It is a small miracle that it all fit, let alone got assembled correctly. The process was not without snafus, however. Multiple sources have reported to AN that in the final hours before the big preview opening on October 1, the large circular construction by Spanish architects Selgascano and helloeverything actually collapsed. Fortunately, it was sturdily put back together for the opening. The team recovered with an elegant tension cable design that worked quite well, and is to be commended under such a strict, last minute timeframe.

CHICAGO’S CRATER

Since 2008, there has been a giant hole where Santiago Calatrava’s Chicago Spire was supposed to rise some 2,000 feet out of the ground. The project lapsed due to financial woes by Irish developer Garrett Kelleher. The foundation is in place, and it looks like a place where a giant swimming pool or music venue would fit nicely, but AN is hearing that developers are working with Danish firm BIG on a possible Spire part deus.

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UNVEILED

Tinucci Architects

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EASTMAN EGG COMPANY

> EASTMAN EGG COMPANY
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Designer: Woodhouse Tinucci Architects

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EVERYTHING IS [GETTING] BIGGER IN TEXAS

continued from front page

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The design of the 6,500 seat amphitheater is inspired by a vintage guitar amp. “It’s what Nashville has needed for a long time,” said Craig Hodgetts, principal at Hodgetts + Fung, which designed the structure. “It was the last piece of the puzzle.” Other recent additions to the city include a new convention center and sports arena.

In developing the design of the 49,000-square-foot project, which seats 6,500 including 4,000 lawn seats, Hodgetts first suggested an installation inspired by the area’s majestic steel bridges and their hulking stone abutments. He then suggested a form evoking the giant barges that make their way down the river. Neither idea took with the client, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean. What did catch his fancy was a sculptural, partly tilted, metallic proscenium inspired by a 1962 Gretsch guitar amp. The building is made up of a steel truss structure topped with a cantilevered standing seam stainless steel roof and supported by a limestone podium, which contains the stage and back-of-house spaces.

“He went ballistic when he saw it,” said Hodgetts, of the mayor. “It said exactly what he wanted to say.” When not in use, the 100-foot-wide and 46-foot-tall stage frames dramatic views of the emerging downtown skyline. Its digitally mixed sound system allowed its shape to break free from the traditional band shell, since the structure’s acoustics didn’t need to be taken into account.

The theater merges nicely with Hawkins Partners’ new 11-acre waterfront park, with the steel and limestone material palette continuing into the landscape through walls, railings, and other elements. “It will be an amenity in the park instead of the park being a bystander,” said Hodgetts.

The park also includes multiuse trails, downtown’s first dog park, gardens, and sports and exercise facilities. On the other side of the stage sits “The Green,” a one and a half acre lawn for events.

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DETROITY TOITY

Housed in a 7,000-square-foot former fire station in Detroit’s Eastern Market, the Wasserman Projects, conceived by Allied Metals CEO Gary Wasserman, held its opening exhibition on September 25. It was immediately one of the most anticipated Design Festival’s must-see events.

Wasserman, an ebullient art collector, native Michigander, and unabashed Detroit booster, envisioned the 8,000-square-foot space as not only a gallery, but also as an incubator for emerging artists, a showcase for established practitioners, a destination for out-of-towners, and a forum for community events.

The opening exhibition featured a sound sculpture by Detroit-based artist John Brumit, a sculpture by Toronto’s Harley Valentine, works on paper by Brooklyn artist Markus Linnenbrink and Miami architect Nick Gelpi. The duo designed a digitally fabricated, concrete interior. The project was completed by May 2016.

Indeed, if demographic trends continue, Houston will overtake Chicago as the country’s third largest city by 2030. “Nobody builds ground-up indie rock clubs... We are imagining what contemporary users want, [and creating] what that would be,” said Schaum. White Oak’s design reflects Houston’s increasing prominence on the global stage while remaining true to the local culture.

To create the three venues, 15,000 square feet of interior space is broken up into a 1,000-seat music hall and a more intimate 200-capacity stage. Outdoors, over 2,000 music fans can congregate on the lawn, where gently sloping turf affords excellent views of the bayou and downtown Houston. Large exterior balconies and a roof terrace create a loose amphitheater around the lawn’s main stage.

The outdoor program synthesizes the bayou and the city, reinforcing Houston’s connection to the water. Hills are rare in this part of Texas, so Schaum/Shieh capitalized on the site’s slope to catch Little White Oak Bayou’s breezes. This, in addition to plantings and shade from the balcony, will cool concertgoers on the lawn. To further integrate the site into the urban fabric, talks are underway to offset the development’s parking space mandates by partnering with University of Houston-Downtown for shuttle access to the site.

The materials, facade, and interior design are all in dialogue with Houston’s vernacular architecture and the historic homes of the Near Northside. The team used overscaled particleboard on the front facade; on the lawn side, it transitions to more industrial materials such as polycarbonate balconies. Schaum/Shieh worked with Norwalk, Connecticut-based acoustics consultant Jaffe Holden to devise interior performance space for amplified and non-amplified sound.

The team, Schaum explained, “lined the interior with a second skin of wood slats, differently spaced, so notes are not dropped.” Also part of the complex is the Raven Tower, a local landmark visible from the adjacent I-45. The six-story tower is topped by a former bachelor pad and weathervane with an oversized metal rooster. The tower will be turned into a bar that references a Houston ice house—a roadside bar that sells bottled beer. The project is expected to be completed by May 2016.

AudiWASSERMAN PROJECTS, A NEW GALLERY SPACE IN DETROIT’S EASTERN MARKET, OFFERS ART AND A PLATFORM FOR URBAN REGENERATION

The best viewpoints were the postcard-sized portals, carved at eye level to offer sightlines into the piece. The piece also cleaves in the middle to accommodate lectures, musical performances, and a novel sitting space.

Prior to the opening, a quartet from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra played inside the half shell. The acoustics were not concert quality, but the wooden shell amplified the sound nicely and cushioned it against the harsh concrete interior.

Beginning next year, the space will host the Cosmopolitan Chicken Project, a permanent installation by Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen. Vanmechelen and his team will crossbreed chickens from different countries as a comment on human diversity. To engage the community, hens’ eggs will be harvested and distributed to locals.

Wasserman is adamant that Detroit is not “the new [jester hill city].” Detroit, he mused, “is a new urban experience.” When asked to elaborate, Wasserman said, “We still don’t know what that’s going to look like.” Putting the project in context means considering the urban fabric around it. The tone and content of the opening exhibition suggests that Wasserman Projects is a dialect derived from a shared language of renewal that arts initiatives use here (and elsewhere) to justify their reason for being. Implicit in Wasserman’s vision of Detroit is the idea that cities grow organically, and, despite cycles of decline, have a capacity for renewal through less-than-tangible processes: community, art, and urban experience. However, cycles of change in Detroit, or any other city, are not random. Government policy, capitalism, and prevailing cultural attitudes facilitate the revival of urban space or contribute to its decline. It’s too early to see how or if the venue will make an impact on Detroit’s “urban experience.” But when one separates Wasserman’s urban vision from his project, the space can still be appreciated for what it is: a nice gallery.
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The resulting 14,000-square-foot museum "has a variety of spaces; each gallery feels like it is its own building and choreographs the viewer’s experience through the building,” said Kanjo. About 10,000 square feet will be devoted to three exhibition spaces and will house about 5 percent of the foundation’s collection, including large sculpture and video installations. Although roughly rectangular, the faceted rooftop feels like a “gathering of forms” and oversize windows look out to the city and San Pedro Creek. Visitors will enter the structure from the west side facing the creek with views of the one acre green space, as well as a sculpture garden on the south side of the property with terraced banks leading down to the water.

Coincidentally, the San Pedro Creek is currently undergoing a major restoration by the city—there are plans to transform the areas along the creek into a public park with pedestrian and bicycle paths. Ruby City is slated to break ground in 2016 and open in 2018, coinciding with San Antonio’s 300th birthday. **ow**

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**PITTSBURGH’S NEWEST TOWER AIMS TO BE ITS GREENEST**

PNC is banking on downtown Pittsburgh with a new building it’s billing as the “world’s greenest tower.” Financial services giant already has three skyscrapers in its hometown. When it opened its fourth on October 1, the Steel City’s newest building, dubbed The Tower at PNC Plaza, became the tallest built downtown since 1988. And, according to its builder, it is also the city’s most efficient. The 33-story tower features a double-skin glass facade and a solar chimney that whisk away fresh air through the building without a heavy-duty air handling system. Gary Paulson, PNC’s director of corporate real estate, tasked architects and engineers at Gensler, Euro firm, and Paulson with bringing sustainable design techniques popular in Europe and East Asia back to the U.S.

Early in the project’s design, Hao Ko, a principal at Gensler, joined Paulson for a tour of ultra-efficient high-rises across Europe. They hit seven cities in seven days, Ko said. The double-skin facade that emerged in the final design is a rarity in the States, but is more prevalent overseas. “We had a game of counting how many buildings just in Germany had double skins,” said Ko, who traded blows with Paulson each time they spotted one, adapting the backseat VW Beetle-hunting game “punch buggy.”

The resulting design leaves the small space between the building’s two facades open and inhabitable, in case employees want to take a phone call in what Paulson calls “no-man’s land.” They should want a more expansive breather, however; the building’s 28th floor offers a terrace and “indoor park” with greenery and a radiant-heated floor. At those heights the facade switches to a six-story cable wall system to cut down on visual clutter and create a more immediate connection to the outdoors, said Gensler principal Ben Tranel, technical director on the project. “We realized we created something that’s a unique experience,” Tranel said, “looking out through a really transparent facade and feeling very connected to nature.”

Inside, outside air is encouraged to flow between open windows and the building’s central cavity and custom furniture from Haworth leaves the office floor open. Heat accumulates on the building’s roof, which is painted black, pulling air through so-called solar chimney.

To fine-tune that concept, the designers built an inhabitable mock-up of one of the tower’s floors in a parking lot in suburban Green Tree, Pennsylvania. That model led to changes in the coloring of the blinds and other details, ensuring Ko and other designers that their building would have a light airiness instead of a stack of who-knows-whats.

We wanted people to feel it, and get that big rush of sensation that cool air coming across your face and your body,” said Ko, adding, “That’s actually harder to do in a controlled way.” The stack effect, which describes how air rushes out from high-rise buildings, worked against the idea of employee comfort. And according to the client, comfort—not efficiency—was the primary goal. The Tower at PNC Plaza uses about half as much energy as a traditional office building and less than a quarter as much water, according to PNC, but Gary Paulson said the project’s ultimate success would hinge on whether employees want to work there. “You need to put a stake in the ground and try to exceed what anyone has done and what you’ve done before,” said Paulson. “And we’re hoping someone else exceeds what we’ve done.” **cb**
Reduce Build Speed and Earn Valuable LEED Credits with KingZip™.

The KingZip™ Standing Seam Roof Panel provides three critical factors the industry demands today. It is a single component roof system that delivers faster installation time compared to built-up roofs, provides excellent thermal performance with a high R-value, and can help projects earn valuable LEED credits. Formed with insulated metal panels (IMPs), a KingZip roof provides these benefits in a way that’s not just practical – but far superior to standard built-up roofing systems.
This spring, a 1901 church in Chicago’s Little Italy was converted to a 5,500-square-foot single-family home.

With rental income in mind, a previous owner began to convert the church several years back, but he didn’t get very far. The new owners, a family with three young children, commissioned Linc Thelen Design (LTD) as the design-build firm to manage most aspects of the project. Preserving a sense of awe is no small task when partitioning a chapel and bell tower for seven bedrooms and six bathrooms. It was a riddle of light, volume, and materials.

“The client was very involved,” said Linc Thelen, owner of LTD. “In the end it gave us a better product. She had great taste and was fine going over budget.”

The powder room exemplifies this willing extravagance; it took a whole week for crews to install the custom burlap wall covering.

“My goal was keeping the build-out very modern to juxtapose with vintage church details,” Thelen added. Stained glass, exposed brickwork, and ceiling turnbuckles mix happily with bone-white walls, a transparent quartz-clad fireplace with firewood cubbies, a media room, hanging pendants and sconces, stained Hickory cabinets, white quartz kitchen counters, and white oak floors.

Thelen applied the same studied discipline to furnishings, a curated mix of guest pieces and his own craftsmanship. There is mimicry of trusses and turnbuckles in wiry dining chairs and zigzagging hanging lamps, but mostly the home’s mellow modernism stays in the background so vintage showpieces can shine.

A big concern was creating more light and volume in the space. A drop ceiling had butchered the church’s best asset—its chapel. Now the great room, it’s a good spot to congregate once more now that the ceiling lifts 25 feet to the rafters. At the same time, in an architectural version of cap-and-trade, the 40 foot by 40 foot space was broken up into more functional bits. Volume lost and volume gained.

Thelen also blew open the foyer to make it part of the house, in the process putting its large window to work for the great room. As if the build-out’s inherent eclecticism weren’t enough, he supplied the kids with special distractions: a climbing wall in the boys’ bedroom and a hanging swing chair in the girls’ room. For guests, the nursery’s custom wall unit hides a Murphy bed.

Contrasting ceiling heights add intrigue. The bell tower, originally home to the furnace, offers superb views of the neighborhood and the Loop. Thelen installed larger windows and made an attic playroom of the space with a glass floor, glass table, and Lucite chairs. It has just seven feet of headspace. The master suite edges it out with eight. In the end, as they should, every space defers to the cathedral ceilings. 

IAN SPULA
Oklahoma City seems intent on entirely transforming its downtown into a grid of glass and steel towers, some with very good contemporary architects. But sadly, in order to make way for this reflective glass city, it is also destroying much of its architectural heritage.

In 1998 the city's modernist YMCA was torn down to make way for a parking lot. One of the city's first outstanding post World War II modern buildings, it was designed by Oklahoma architects Sorey Hill and Sorey in 1948, but was damaged in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building and was vacant at the time of the demolition. The Oklahoman's Steve Lackmeyer reported that it was destroyed even though "Serious developers believed it could be saved and converted into housing."

Then in 2014, developers demolished one of the icons of 1970s architecture, John Johansen's Mummers Theater (later renamed Stage Center), which was a terrible loss for fans of this unique structure and modern architecture. Now comes word that two other architecturally significant Oklahoma City buildings have met the wrecking ball to make way for the new glass city: The Hotel Black and the adjacent American Motor Hotel were imploded in September. Constructed in 1930 and designed by Blackburn, Henderson and Thurman, it "was only one of several ornate hotels constructed in Oklahoma City after the oil boom of 1928" according to the Oklahoma Historic Society. "One feature that distinguished the Black from other hotels was its blend of geometric and Indian design ornamentation."

In addition, the 1941 Art Deco-styled Union Bus Station was denied any protection by the Downtown Design Review Committee, and the city along with Dallas-based developer Hines both claimed the building was not historic and argued for its destruction to be replaced by a 27-story tower and two garages.

These buildings are not only a loss for architectural preservationists but for the city, which needs a range and array of styles and building types to give it texture and urbanity. But all is not lost in Oklahoma City as Lackmeyer seems to argue for the need preservation in the city and several local preservation groups and blogs are rallying to save more buildings from meeting the fate of these modernist structure.

Finally we reported on the effort to preserve and re-use the 1958 Route 66 gold geodesic dome, whose owners offered to sell it to anyone who would remove it. But after a deluge of offers, the owners decided to preserve the structure and now it is the home to a local engineering company. It is just the sort of building that visitors will seek out. It gives Oklahoma City a profile and a character and makes one hopeful the city will hold onto its uniqueness and save its heritage from the wrecking ball.
**BORN ON THE BAYOU**

With the addition of 150 miles of walkways and bike trails, Houston’s Bayou Greenways project is on course to link up all new and existing parkland along the city’s bayou network.

The scheme aims to be complete by 2020, despite experiencing difficulty acquiring plot spaces from some landowners. Boosted by the city council’s approval of $19 million for the project, the Houston Parks Board can now press on and purchase more land.

Houston’s residents eagerly anticipate Bayou Greenways. In 2012, 68 percent of voters approved the proposal’s $166 million in parks funding, coming one step closer to realizing urban planner and landscape architect Arthur Comey’s 1912 master plan bayou-park vision. The 302 miles of trails and 4,000 acres of parkland will connect suburban neighborhoods to establish a new social space where people can meet, walk, and discover the edges of Houston.

According to the Bayou Greenways 2020 website, the project captures the area’s “Houstonness” while “celebrating the experiential variety of each individual bayou, [creating] a cohesive identity for Houston Bayou Greenways as a whole.”

Houston Bayou Greenways 2020, under the Houston Parks Board, commissioned Houston-based landscape architecture firms Clark Condon and SWA Group to realize these goals. They will seek to create green getaways from the city and a distilled sense of place in the area, offering a contrast to its urban surroundings.

Catherine Butsch, communications manager of the Houston Parks Board, said that as part of a 30 year maintenance agreement, city tax revenue will be set aside toward maintenance.

For the future, Butsch says the board already has aspirations for how they want the project to develop. Currently, the Bayou complex sprays East to West, providing drainage to the surrounding areas. Butsch said the board intends to implement a North-South system that would go on to form a grid—edging closer still to Comey’s ideal of a park that took advantage of the natural ecology while benefitting its inhabitants.

**“BOOMBOXES” ARE POP-UP RETAIL SHOPS THAT THEIR DESIGNERS HOPE WILL ENLIVEN CHICAGO’S STREETS**

Tactical urbanism is having a moment in Chicago. In 2013 the city elected to advance arts, culture, and retail for its 49 underused pint-sized public spaces. The gig went to Latent Design, who responded to a request for proposals with a pitch for micro-retail kiosks as a way to activate forgotten bits of the public sphere. The firm spent a year working with city departments and the mayor to craft an ordinance legalizing the sale of goods and services on public rights-of-way.

“We’ve done a number of design interventions, but eventually you have to move past the acupuncture and get to a system,” said Katherine Darnstadt, founder and principal of Latent Design. “This is a time of dwindling city services, so we’re asking through design and place-making how we can decentralize services, bring arts and culture deeper into neighborhoods, and support small local businesses.”

Darnstadt brought the kiosk concept to design-build firm Formed Space. “Her idea was fantastic,” said Formed Space founder Conrad Szajna. “With a tight budget and quick turnaround, we chose to work with shipping containers.” Szajna sourced them from a container graveyard on the South Side for $1,000 to $3,500 a pop. He keeps to the lower end and the scrappers cut and weld onsite before delivering the modified containers to Formed Space’s warehouse.

The first modular, pre-fabricated Boombox was installed September 15 on a narrow Wicker Park plaza owned by the Chicago Department of Transportation. Over the next three years Latent Design will manage, develop, and brand (controversially) the kiosks and other installations across 600,000 square feet of public space—much like they’ve done with their pop-up People Spots.

For the prototype, Darnstadt and Szajna supplanted all four fixed walls with an accordion facet that creates nooks for storage so vendors won’t overwhelm their 200- to 400-square-foot sales floor with countertops and shelving. In the future, they may cut out the ceiling for extra clearance or double the depth by fusing containers.

The hope is that Boomboxes will live at their sites for three years, but when it comes time to pack it in, collapsibility ensures a quick and easy relocation. Rents at the first Boombox site will be on par with that stretch of the Milwaukee Avenue corridor, but a little cheaper than weekend festivals. “You can go to Renegade (Craft Fair) and be hot and sweaty or you can have your own store-front with air conditioning and steady foot traffic,” said Darnstadt.

It could be a proving ground for entrepreneurs with limited capital. Lease terms of two weeks to three months are the sweet spot, particularly in the warm season, but vendors can make a case for longer stays.

Latent Design took the space through September to work out the kinks. An Architecture Biennial installation settled in for October, a lending library booked it for November, and private vendors will arrive in December ahead of the holidays.
“My first thought about DEKTON was the material has a lot of character, an intrinsic character that is as deep as natural stone, but in a completely innovative way with improved resistance, properties and made in large format.”

Daniel Libeskind
The Algarve terrace cover, offered up to 13 by 20 feet, features a gutter system that drains water away from the rotating aluminum roof louvers. It can be fitted with lighting, heating, and audio accessories.

renson.us

Set in a hardscape or landscape, these ceramic boulders provide visual interest as well as seating. Custom engraving is offered. Available in rounded and elongated profiles and several colorways.

ateliervierkant.com

These cast concrete landscape containers take their design cues from nature: Composed of 24 facets placed at 15-degree intervals, the tapered-cylindrical forms interpret the earth’s rotation. Designed by Larry Kornegay.

kornegaydesign.com

The bench’s slatted design prevents water and debris from collecting on the seat. Part of a 13-piece collection of tables and seating, the powder-coated steel pieces are offered in three colors. Designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec.

hay.dk

This modular, outdoor-ready workspace is framed in metal and sheathed in Sunbrella fabric. A weather-resistant table-bench combo, BuzziBreeze, is also offered. Designed in collaboration with Atelier Tradewinds.

buzzi.space

This robust bollard provides glare-free widespread symmetrical illumination while doubling as a piece of urban furniture for schools, parks, and other public areas. Fabricated of die-cast aluminum, the fixture is rated for wet locations. Offered in four standard colors with custom hues available.

bega-us.com
A notable, nascent trend in site furnishings: pieces that are specifically designed to accommodate working outdoors. By Leslie Clagett

7 Comfony 600
Benkert Bänke
A sinuous, contoured stainless steel frame is fitted with aluminum slats to create a minimalist lounger. Components are offered in a limited palette of colors and finishes.

8 Twist Bike Rack
Forms + Surfaces
Tweaking a double helix form, this bike rack offers two-point support and multiple locking options. Made of solid cast aluminum, it is available in 15 standard and custom powder-coat finishes.

9 Grove Furniture and Lily Shade
Sixinch
A 90-watt solar panel topping the Lily Shade powers an integral charging station, allowing users at the modular Grove tables and seats to plug in.

10 Basket Planters
Fermob
A steel frame and convenient handle make these aluminum planters easily portable. The Long model measures 47 by 10 by 21 inches; the High model measures 28 by 13 by 33 inches. Available with anti-UV powder coating in 24 colors. Designed by Fabio Meliota.

11 Big Blok with Lights
Tectura Designs
Combining seating with lighting, this massive cast-concrete form measures 52 by 52 by 18 inches. A coordinating bench-style model is also available. Designed by Damon Farber Associates.

12 Stay Bench
Landscape Forms
Part of the 35 Collection, this curvaceous cantilevered bench comes in backless and backed models; skateboard-discouraging seat dividers are optional. Surface- or embedded installations are offered. Twenty-two standard colors and custom finishes are available. Designed by frog.
Fermob has been developing French industrial know-how in the metalwork sector for more than 100 years. 32 outdoor furniture collections in 24 exclusive colors. Find Fermob products around the world, as well as at fermobusa.com

➥ contact: info@fermobusa.com
On Solid Ground

Decking and pavers can enhance the look of a site while improving its environmental functionality. By Leslie Clagett

1. Treo Unilock
   - These pavers feature EnduraColor, two performance layers that are compressed and cured together to increase the strength and durability of the surfacing and amplify the intensity of the color. Available in three formats and five colorways.
   - commercial.unilock.com

2. Aqua Roc Belgard
   - Aqua Roc permeable pavers boast an attractive residential look that stands up to the heaviest vehicular traffic. The sustainable pavers reduce water runoff, are comfortable underfoot, and ADA-compliant.
   - belgard.com

3. Sand Tectura Designs
   - These pressed-concrete pavers are colored by tinting the cement matrix with standard-sized aggregate. Economically priced, the units have a uniform slip-resistant surface and are strong enough to be pedestal-set. In five standard hues; custom shades available.
   - tecturadesigns.com

4. Wood Decking Tiles and Versadjust Supports Bison Innovative Products
   - These adjustable deck supports are height-adjustable, have a 1,250-pound weight bearing capacity, and feature built-in slope compensation from zero to half-inch-foot slope. Suitable for residential and commercial projects, the pedestals accommodate a variety of surface materials, including wooden deck tiles and concrete pavers.
   - bisonip.com

5. Morvan Rocersa
   - The buff tones of this porcelain paver give it wide aesthetic compatibility. Field tiles are offered in two sizes, with numerous trim pieces available.
   - rocersa.es
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All summer, a lively cavalcade of events and performances testified to a reawakened cosmopolitanism in Detroit and proclaimed a community that is growing in size and complexity. Detroit’s 139 square miles are suddenly teeming with contemporary art, design, and development activity. The projects are no longer isolated but connect larger tracts: the Jam Handy industrial film production building-turned-performance space hosts a temporary Sunday market, around the corner from the ONE Mile funk revivalist project by Anya Sirola and Jean Louis Fargès, with Catie Newell’s studio halfway between. A land rush has begun in the area.

Enter Culture Lab Detroit. The three-year-old brainchild of Birmingham-based designer and creative director Jane Schulak, Culture Lab Detroit orchestrates dialogues between the Detroit community and internationally renowned designers and urbanists, instigating potentially paradigm-shifting collaborations that evangelize green interventions in the landscape.

“My platform is about connectivity,” Schulak said. “I pose a design question each year and try to identify people who will respond to that question in all very different ways.”

In early September, urban ecology-themed panels in packed auditoriums at the College for Creative Studies and the Detroit Institute of Arts brought together San Francisco chef Alice Waters, industrial-scale urban farmer Will Allen, French vertical gardener Patrick Blanc, Oakland landscape architect Walter Hood, and Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto to discuss strategies for greening the city and evolving architecture with nature.

“I’ve always thought that agriculture could be the lead piece to bringing these cities back,” Allen, who grew up in a sharecropping family in Maryland, said. “This city is really primed for local production because all of the vacant land where you could grow food. There’s a lot of opportunity.”

At Acre Farm in North Corktown, several blocks adjacent to the highway form a patchwork of fertile fields that skip over paved streets, the only sign of a once-populous neighborhood. Acre Farm is in an in-demand but mostly demolished area between the MotorCity Casino Hotel and a retail strip on Michigan Avenue (pioneered by restaurateur Phil Cooley). The farm is marked with large plywood “CITY DO NOT CUT” signs to prevent public agencies from mistaking it for overgrown lots.

Urban agriculture is not new, yet the diversity of greening tactics and players spreads benefits far from the heavily invested downtown, the Woodward strip, and Midtown areas. The number of farming and gardening initiatives has multiplied: Keep Growing Detroit has supported 4,000 gardens in the last decade with seed packs, transplants, educational, and technical assistance. Nonprofits like the Greening of...
Detroit have planted about 4,000 trees in the past year, while Hantz Woodlands installed 15,000 trees in a square mile of East Detroit. In 2013, the City Council adopted a zoning ordinance that legalized existing urban farms and set standards for agricultural land use.

“For some of the more grassroots or ground-up entrepreneurs, it’s all based on returning to true connections between people, relying on businesses that can help support your business, that are within the city itself, and producing real food that you know who grows it,” said D MET studio’s Liz Skrisson. D MET designed offices and a Great Lakes Coffee shop for Midtown Inc., a major player in cultural developments and a tech innovation district near the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The Ye-Old-Brooklyn style pioneered by John McCormick in Williamsburg—repurposed wood, distressed paint, thematically culled antiques, industrial objects, and Edison light bulbs—is as pervasive here as elsewhere. Culture LabDetroit, however, is cognizant of a need to move beyond adaptive reuse to pioneer innovative buildings: nothing of any architectural significance has happened here in decades. Schulak’s advisory board is packed with a savvy group of local and international cultural leaders, among them Reed Kroloff, David Adjaye, collector Marc Schwartz, and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit founder Marsha Miro.

Miro selected Hood and Fujimoto for a panel that emphasized ecological design to create landscapes and structures that connect people and evoke delight. Fujimoto incorporated vegetation into high-rises that mimic both repetitive and idiosyncratic patterns in plant life. Like inversions of vacant houses overgrown with wilderness, the design rationalizes natural forms into building technologies.

“I do think fresh voices are good for a place,” Hood said. “Places that become so insular keep repeating the same patterns over and over again: bringing people in might help others get excited.”

The dialogues double as provocations for speakers to explore Detroit: local facilitators tour designers around sites and schedule meetings with project organizers and entrepreneurs, offering a platform to present proposals. For the past year, Patrick Blanc has speculated on ways to grow vegetation on the concrete embankments along the Dequindre Cut. Blanc seeks to irrigate the plants without access to running water. Hood is working on a concept for a square-mile area near the northeastern edge, incorporating blue-green infrastructure concepts from the 2012 Detroit Future City strategic plan to deploy large depopulated spaces for the benefit of those still living there. “One of the things that I’m interested in is how you can change people’s sociology through the pattern on the landscape,” he said.

The Flower House, a project by Lisa Waud, will create floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck. Inspired by the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, twenty or so florists will descend on the house during...
the weekend of October 16, filling its rooms with flower arrangements. Afterward, the house will be deconstructed and the lot will become a flower farm.

Further north, near the Squash House, the Play House, the Power House, the Sound House, and the Ride It Sculpture Park—a well-known collection of repurposed homes and lots by Gina Reichart and Mitch Cope of Design 99 and Powerhouse Productions—ceramicist Abigail Murray and architect Steven Mankouche (Archolab) are building a passive greenhouse in the burned out foundation of a 1920s bungalow. The team erected a slanted south-facing polycarbonate roof within the existing foundation, cladding the exterior with dark charcoal slats (cutoffs from a lumber mill) charred using the ancient Japanese shou-sugi-ban method. Inside, they plan to grow almond, olive, and pomegranate trees, as well as other non-native plants.

“The project is in dialogue with blight in a lot of ways, and how we can deal with blight other than just ripping everything out of the ground and carting it to a landfill,” said Mankouche, a professor at the University of Michigan’s College of Architecture. After the project is completed, Archolab plans to donate it to a local gardener and evaluate its reproducibility in other places.

Elsewhere in Hamtramck, sculptors Andrew Mehall and Ben Hall, co-owners of the Eastern Market’s Russell Street Deli, are using a large warehouse as a gallery to stabilize a block overgrown with weeds and grass, its double-height space presenting a fair likeness of industrial Bushwick. However, these reclamation projects demand fortitude. The day we visit, Hall struggled to open the gallery door after a break-in the night before—scraping metal is a full-time occupation for pickup-driving bandits in southeast Michigan. Inside, the gallery exhibits colorful truck-sized inflatable pieces by Chicago-based Scottish artist Claire Ashley.

“In a lot of ways the gallery is just a basic stopgap to keep the neighborhood solid,” Hall wrote in an e-mail. “In one way we’re pretty anti any kind of Richard Florida narrative...As the businesses in the neighborhood that were hanging on by a thread gave up, or let go, or demurred, or decided to forfeit, it became a matter of introducing some solidarity, or reintroducing occupants for the sake of the building not being vacant.”

Within this ambivalence lies much of the trepidation about the city’s fast-moving developments. Dan Gilbert’s Quicken Loan-led renovations—all paid for with the ill-gotten gains of payday lending—gobble up dozens of downtown buildings to restore long-lost landmarks. Among these is a planned SHoP-designed replacement for the symbolically important Hudson’s building. Another example is Chene Ferry Market, a voluminous closed-down farmer’s market in Poletown that is part of large-scale urban design initiative led by Dan Pitera’s University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC). Situated in a spottily inhabited area on the East Side, RecoveryPark uses urban farming, fisheries, value-added foods, and a farmer’s market to provide job skills training to substance abusers, the formerly incarcerated, and others struggling to land on-the-books employment. Working with the mayor’s office and the new planning director Maurice Cox, DCDC is designing RecoveryPark and other mile-wide areas far from the central business district with a mixture of ecological and commercial functions.

“We wanted to show that every area that looks like this is right adjacent to a dense area,” said Pitera. “Can they be seen more as a unit? Then you design them in a way that this could become blue-green infrastructure, more interesting design opportunities, like retail, that become assets for the denser area. How do we think about design in ways that can keep people in place, think about more off-grid ideas for people who live in neighborhoods like this?”

Stephen Zacks is an internationally recognized architecture and urbanism reporter, theorist, and cultural producer based in Greenpoint, Brooklyn and a native of Detroit.

The Flower House is a project by Lisa Waud where artists will make floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck.

Above: The industrial stock of Detroit provides a backdrop for urban agriculture.

The Flower House is a project by Lisa Waud where artists will make floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck.

Above: The industrial stock of Detroit provides a backdrop for urban agriculture.
One would assume that virtual reality technologies that can create fantastical battlefields and solar systems for gamers would be a boon for architects, who can create nearly complete structures without turning a single shovelful of earth. For landscape architects, though, earth poses unique challenges. So do air, light, and water. With the advance of computer drafting and simulation technologies, such as architectural visualization and 3-D modeling software Twinmotion and Rhino—in addition to relatively old-fashioned tools like Illustrator and Pencil—designers are discovering new, better ways to create landscapes. They enable designers to represent detail at microscopic proportions. They can place viewers in virtual environments that seek to mimic the experience of seeing the proposed landscape.

“Every image, every piece of that visualization is a design decision,” said Signe Nielsen, principal at Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, which recently collaborated with Heatherwick Studio on Pier 55, a proposed park-pier on the west side of Manhattan. Visioning exercises, in which designer-activists seek to change the public’s thinking about a landscape, if not to change the place itself, are blurring the lines between technology and earth and between designer and public.

The Uses of Representation

As inherently public creations, many landscape projects lend themselves to stakeholder and public-sector input more so than private developments. They must serve the people who look at them as much as they do the people who own and use them. They also must fulfill multiple goals. A park may also be a habitat for native species. A highway median may also absorb storm water. A golf course can offset a heat island. A landscape can extend up to the stratosphere and down to the water table. Every piece of land is influenced by temperature, geology, precipitation, and countless other invisible factors.

As a result, “These visualizations are shown to a huge range of people, from zoning approval boards, historic preservation boards, open public meetings related to zoning approval,” said Robert Lloyd, senior associate at Arquitectonica who recently designed the landscaping around the portals to the PortMiami Tunnel. “The largest and most public audiences are the various...
The revolution in computer technologies has given architects and landscape architects a dazzling array of new tools. Those tools, though, may not necessarily be as useful as they appear—especially for landscape architects—and they must be used with discretion.

"I think it's more difficult...than architecture," Lloyd said. "You're dealing with much more loosely defined spaces with much more complex geography. In the simplest way, there's just more information in a landscape rendering."

Static renderings, drawn by hand or with illustrator, might capture the appearance of a landscape—at a certain moment, from a certain angle—but they cannot express the entirety of its purposes nor the ways that they serve flora, fauna, and people. A landscape may not fit into a neat box for the eye to behold, even with the most advanced visualization software.

"You're trying to render something that's inherently unpredictable," said Lloyd. "The form of one tree is and should be different from the form of the next tree. The way they interact over time in nature is super-complex."

To Visualize or Not Visualize

More so than many other public projects, Pier 55 sprang fully formed into the public consciousness. Funded in part by media titan Barry Diller, the park has been fashioned as more of a gift than a public amenity. The firms used Twinmotion to create impressions of the project space that promises to be the waterfront equivalent of the High Line. It's the distinctive sort of project that might literally be unimaginable, and unassailable, without visual aids.

"The ability to actually do a [digital] visualization at whatever level of detail and finished product that we want to convey is extraordinary," said Lloyd. "I feel that everybody wins. The public knows what it's really going to get. The client knows what it's really paying for. And I know what I've designed."

What Nielsen would use to present a finished work of starchitecture, though, might not have gone over so well with a more nascent project. "The first and most important thing is to calibrate the type of visualization with the stage in the process, particularly for outreach," said Nielsen.

The trouble is twofold: Programs' capacity for detail can often outstrip designers' own imaginative capacities, especially when a project consists largely of vegetation. And a project that appears complete and polished on screen can, intentionally or not, be an affront to stakeholders who wish to contribute their own ideas or public officials who are given to scrutiny. These situations may call for old-fashioned representations.

"I'd never want to walk into an early-on meeting with a group of stakeholders and show a design that looks finished," said Nielsen. "I think it really shuts down communication."

Therefore, designers must use technology judiciously, being careful to impress but not to overwhelm the public. With the likes of Diller and other big clients, though, they might take the opposite tack: creating dazzling renderings to land a commission or sell units in a residential development.

Appropriation by Visualization

For all its anonymity, California's Owens Lake is one of the most adulterated, and long-contested, landscapes in the United States. The 1913 opening of the Los Angeles Aqueduct appropriated the lake's tributary streams and left a toxic dust-bowl. For generations, engineers have tried to restore the lake and cut down on dust pollution.

The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, thinks they might be doing it wrong.

Robinson came up with his own method of imagining what Owens Lake can become. Resembling a 1980s arcade game console, the Rapid Landscape Prototyping Machine for the Owens Lake Dust Control Project (or Owens Lake Machine), invites participants to create their own versions of Owens Lake—ideally, versions that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, and respectful of the place itself.

"We took place-making experience and aesthetics, and inserted those values into a design paradigm of operations, habitat design, and resource management, so it's a response to the idea that maybe we could make an interface for designers that creates a dialectic," said Robinson.

Users can decide how much water the lake should contain, what sort of dust-reducing berms it should employ, what angle of sunlight is most pleasing, and how many birds should be bobbing on the lake surface. A rendering program takes user input to generate two images of the lake: a human-scale view from the surface and an abstract map-like view from above.

"It has two different views of planning," said Robinson. "There's a first-person view, the human experience, and the planner's view of someone who's having control."

The machine then prints out postcards depicting these not-quite-imagined but not-quite-real versions of the lake, thus making it seem like an actual destination from which to write home. Robinson hopes that the keepseakers will encourage the public to think about ways that the lake can be restored and the concerns that public agencies, in a democratic society, should consider.

"The social imagination is a very powerful political force and guides these projects kind of in a subliminal way," said Robinson.

Another group is leaving its virtual mark not in topography but rather in bathymetry. The Drainage Research Collaborative (DRC) is dedicated to inquiry into underwater landscapes, specifically those that are manipulated, restored, and adulterated by the process of dredging. Their research sites include New York Harbor, the Great Lakes, and Louisiana. Researchers use data-enhanced maps to represent that which is otherwise unknown precisely because it is invisible.

"The public is very used to looking at things like watershed maps and water flow diagrams," said Gena Wirth, a member of the DRC and the design principal at SCAPE landscape architects. "We try to make a lot of comparable imagery...looking at [things like] sediment sheds."

Wirth is also conducting a project in Lexington, Kentucky. There, the firm developed a smartphone app to trace and illustrate streams flowing through the karst landscape underneath the city's downtown. The app is accompanied by a plywood model that displays both city blocks and stream channels. The project is intended to make residents aware of these hidden waterways and to consider the natural cycles that persist even amid urbanization.

"It's difficult to get people excited about what is essential culvert underground," said Wirth. The app is "definitely an alternative way of interpreting landscape architecture. It's about visualizing something that is invisible. It's more narrative-based."

The Image of Nature

Other types of visualization convey not what the land looks like—with or without deliberate design—but rather how it functions.

Throughout Los Angeles' current four-year drought, many critics have wondered why the city does not capture its rainwater or at least use it to replenish its natural aquifers. Aja Bulla-Richards, of the Arcadia Institute at The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Woodbury University, has developed a low-tech way of explaining why it's not so easy.

Richards illustrated the mysteries of permeability in a pilot project called Connect the Dots. She enlisted residents in a working class community in Los Angeles' Pacoima neighborhood to place manhole-sized multicolored dots throughout their community. Richardson identified areas of low, medium, and high permeability, correlated with dot colors. By interpreting Richards' data, residents placed dots in appropriate places, thus turning the landscape itself into its own data set.

"I think having this one to one coding notation of the street lets people interact with it in a more visceral, direct way," said Richards. "It's different from having a map."

Richards said that this low-tech version of augmented reality can apply to almost any set of spatially oriented information in an urban landscape.

"It's a quick, cheap transformation that allows people to think about the street differently without concerns over major investments in change," said Richards.

And ultimately seeing differently so a public can think differently about landscape and the built environment is what these visualization tools are all about. Digital software and participatory interactions have the ability to go beyond video game fantasy and engage a larger stakeholder discussion on the design and impact of real world landscapes now that there are more tools to complement, restore, and even improve what nature has given us.

Josh Stephens
This year, AI|N's Best of Design Awards features **18 categories**

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OCTOBER

THURSDAY 24
LECTURE
The Architects of the White City
11:00 a.m.
Museum of Science and Industry
5700 South Lake Shore Dr.
msichicago.org

EVENT
AIA Austin 29th Annual Homes Tour
10:00 a.m.
801 West 12th St., Austin
aiaaustin.org

THURSDAY 29
LECTURE
Xavier Worna:
After the Revolution
Artist Talk
6:00 p.m.
Stony Island Arts Bank
6760 South Stony Island Ave.
stoneyislandartsbank.org

FRIDAY 30
FILM
Loos Ornamental
72 min.
7:45 p.m.
Gene Siskel Film Center
164 North State St.
siskelfilmcenter.org

SATURDAY 31
EVENT
Preservation Dallas Fall Architectural Tour
8:30 a.m.
Dallas Center for Architecture
1909 Woodall Rodgers Freeway
Dallas
dallascfa.com

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 1
LECTURE
Rick Valicenti: City of Design
3:00 p.m.
Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Ave.
chicagohumanities.org

TUESDAY 3
LECTURE
Carol Ross Barney et al.
Right or Privilege: Design in the Public Realm
3:00 p.m.
Chicago Cultural Center
78 East Washington St.
chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org

THURSDAY 5
CONFERENCES
Facades+
Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza River North
350 West Mart Center Dr.
facadesplus.com

76th Annual Convention and Design Expo
Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
650 South Griffin St., Dallas
texasarchitects.org

WEDNESDAY 11
LECTURE
DCFA: Architectural Photography Panel Discussion
6:00 p.m.
Dallas Center for Architecture
1909 Woodall Rodgers Freeway
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dallascfa.com

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STONY ISLAND ARTS BANK
Stony Island Arts Bank
6760 South Stony Island Ave., Chicago
Carlos Bunga, Under the Skin, through January 3
Frida Escobedo, Materials Reservoir, through January 3

The Stony Island Arts Bank is a project of Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates’ nonprofit Rebuild Foundation. The foundation converted a vacant former savings bank on the South Side into an archive, exhibition space, and community center to encourage artist-led, community-driven revitalization. Current programming includes works by Barcelona-based multimedia artist Carlos Bunga, and architect Frida Escobedo (Mexico City).

For Under the Skin, Bunga uses cardboard and adhesive tape to create a fluid space that responds to the surrounding architecture and comments on the making process. The piece comments on how meaning and materiality can be appropriated and constructed by each participant.

For Materials Reservoir, Escobedo gathered debris from a demolished South Side church to create a reverse Tower of Babel, with walls that can be re-arranged and destroyed. The pieces comments on how meaning and materiality can be appropriated and constructed by each participant.

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DOODLING IN THE GRID

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Sôshu Fujimoto’s “Everything is Architecture” site in the decadent Chicago Cultural Center with MOS’ Corridor House.

Down to Earth

Robert Smithson in Texas
By Leigh Arnold, Amy Von Lintel, Elyse Goldberg, and Maxwell Anderson
Estate of Robert Smithson and James Cohan Gallery, $25

Amarillo Ramp, 1973

The artist Robert Smithson famously wanted to move beyond the constraints imposed by gallery walls and pushed into the open air and Earth Art movement in the late 1960s. He was particularly drawn to the 360-degree view corridors of the American West—spaces very different from the deteriorating cities of his native New Jersey and New York City. Here, in uninhabited and remote locations, he created large earthworks like his 1970 Spiral Jetty in Utah’s Great Salt Lake. But what is lesser known are the four works he created for various prairie and gulf locations in Texas; these are highlighted in the catalogue accompanying the Dallas Museum of Art exhibition Robert Smithson in Texas.

The best known of these projects—and the only one completed—is a 1973 companion sculpture to the Spiral Jetty called Amarillo Ramp. Unfortunately, he died in a plane crash when supervising its construction. Even lesser known fact: In 1966, he was commissioned to develop concepts for terminal buildings at Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport and a large scale earthwork to be installed at the airport fringes. Most of the catalogue is devoted to Amarillo Ramp and Richard Serra, Tony Shafrazi, and Nancy Holt’s construction on it after Smithson’s death. But Leigh Arnold, who authored the catalogue, claimed that the airport plan had “far-reaching implications for the artist, leading him to establish new art forms: the concept of aerial art, which became the precursors to his large-scale earthworks.” In fact, Smithson worked on the project as a consultant with project engineers to “rethink the various meanings behind the idea of a terminal.” He pushed them to think about structures as “incremental units, or crystalline structures” that reflected a “lingering influence of minimalist sculpture.” The project made Smithson think about peripheries and how to communicate these edges to the center of a project. Arnold also claims that this center-periphery dialectic referred to New York as the center of the art world. He proposed mounting cameras that would relay images of the edge to the terminal center.

Many of the earth forms that would make their way into Smithson’s work—wandering earth mounds, asphalt spirals, and gravel paths—were used in the design. The catalogue highlights the airport project in drawings and a sculptural plan in stone. The drawings are simple and not sophisticated as architecture drawings but they do foreground the power of images to convey the idea of landscape and stand for the powerful idea of landscape as art. WILLIAM MENKING

Chicago has always dreamed of a better version of itself. Founded with big ambitions on a swamp next to Lake Michigan, carried forward by trains, meat-packing, and real estate development, rebuilt after the Great Fire and re-organized by Daniel Burnham three decades later, grided in plan and grided by skyscrapers, Chicago always wants to be bigger, cleaner, and more rational. Now with the Chicago Architecture Biennial, open through January 3, 2016, Chicago corrals those dreams one more time and invites an international audience in to view its latest new and improved self.

Supported by the city, British Petroleum, and a host of other partners, the Biennial certainly got off to a grand and ambitious start that had the media buzzing. Then reality intruded. The reality check first took the form of the Biennial’s main venue, the Chicago Cultural Center. Formerly the city’s main downtown library, it is an ornate, neo-classical number, opened in 1897 with designs by Shepley, Ruttan, and Coolidge, of weight and integrity but no particular distinction, beyond some lovely stained glass. It presents the exhibitors with the Cooper Hewitt problem: It is a building that draws so much attention to its own weight of history and ambition that it is difficult for the exhibitions continued on page 33
DOODLING IN THE GRID continued from page 32 to breathe. Luckily (sort of), many of the spaces have long since lost some of their luster, so that exhibitors in the lower levels have white-walled halls in which to draw attention to what seems to be a plethora of 1960s utopian thinking and style.

We do seem to be having a particular postmodern moment here, one that focuses on the intersection of melting classicism and space age faith in technology that brings to mind as much *Barbarella* as it does Archigram. Between workAC's collaboration with Ant Farm and Mark Wasiuta's, Marco Sanchez's, and Adam Bandier's unveiling of archival material belonging to the archi-media collective Environmental Communications—who collaborated with like-minded radical practices like Superstudio and Ant Farm—there is plenty that recalls the era of acid-colored daydreaming of a more voluptuous and fluid future infested with the ruins of a dying order.

Along the same lines are Moon Hoon's "Doodle Constructivism" drawings. They draw inspiration from similar post-modern sources, but carry the aesthetic forward with a combination of K-Pop, manga sensibility, and Hoon's signature nonchalance. Smout Allen and Geoff Manaugh work in a similar mode, though their inspiration is more Lebbeus Woods than Peter Cook and his posse.

Doodling also permeates the work of what I think is the most successful exhibition in the Cultural Center, Sou Fujimoto's array of ashtrays, shredded paper, pine cones, and tea strainers re-imagined as koans for architecture, merely through the device of adding tiny model figures that make these everyday objects look huge. Whether statements such as, "The faint depth becomes architecture that connects the society and individuals," are meaningful matters less than the visual revelations and the respite from the grand visions and big rooms you achieve when hunched over these little maquettes.

Biennials, when they work, tend to sprawl throughout the city, and this one is no exception. Some of the best work is offsite and temporary, such as Bryony Roberts' corralling of the South Shore Drill Team to take over Mies van der Rohe's Federal Plaza, turning the grand grids into human twirls and swirls. Unfortunately, many such performances only took place during the opening weekend.

My favorite offsite discovery was Xavier Wrona's installation in the Theater Gates-designed Dorchester Art + Housing Collaborative, where the self-proclaimed Marxist architect has been in residence for the last few months. When I arrived with former Cranbrook Dean Reed Kroloff, Wrona daubed his face and hands with red war paint and proceeded to lead us on a twenty-minute tour of the interior, whose recycled boards and intricate built-in furniture was festooned with copies of quotes, diagrams, and citations, all leading to the conclusion that we need to move beyond the affirmation of capitalism through standard building techniques, and toward a more open and revolutionary form of production.

I am not sure either Wrona (who admitted it is a work in progress), nor I, know exactly what it all might mean, but his three-dimensional essay did sum up the contrary conclusion of this Biennial: Less emphasis on traditional buildings and grand plans (Save for the exhibition of David Adjaye's work at the Chicago Art Institute, which felt like it was preparing the natives for his seemingly inevitable anointment as the architect of the Obama Presidential Library) and more on doodling, postmodern reconsiderations, and fragmentary constructions. "Make no big plans," the exhibition seemed to whisper from the corners of its Beaux-Arts prison, "Just subvert the order."

AARON BETSKY IS THE DEAN AT THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT TALIESIN AND TALIESIN WEST. HE SERVED AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE 11TH VENICE INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE.
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counterculture. This is one example of computing that was birthed in 1960s America, as well as one's relationship to "technocratic" to talk about life in postwar modernism, I'm not really referring to a style of a dome in a show—it's a particular kind of a reconstruction of a dome in a show—it's a particular kind of dome, most people call it a geodesic—that was created by the guys at Drop City and will feature a collaborative painting that they made. It was actually originally sent for an art show back in 1968, but it was lost so we recommissioned it for the space. There's also a project by Ken Isaacs called the "Knowledge Box." It's a volume of ten cubic feet, the size of a room that contains multiple side projectors. Subsequently there are images that are projected onto all the surfaces, floors, ceiling, and walls. I guess his idea was that the future of education would be more derived from images than words. This project tried to find spaces where these images could go. These are the kinds of projects that we can display because architecture at the time, or rather the radical architecture at the time, wasn't about building buildings as much as it was thinking about the concepts of space and the environment. And then there is the other design stuff, something we called anti-design at the time, which went against the traditions of product design. As a result, you would be more experimental with furniture and create do-it-yourself furniture-like products that maybe wouldn't fit in the mainstream. Almost all young people were radical: students and recent graduates from architecture programs in the 1960s and '70s didn't want to participate in the traditional forms of practice and didn't want to wait until they were 50 or 60 years old to build a building! These people were more interested in doing more conceptual projects that almost merged into the realm of art. A lot of those experiments dealt with questions of media and technology. How do you think that some of those ideas, projects, and critiques have aged, especially in relationship to democratizing social experience and creating new power structures and economies? Right, well, there are some direct examples like the architecture group Archigram that did a huge number of speculative projects. A good example is "Info Gonks," which today we would call Google Glass. It's a wearable form of technology, except then it was framed in the context of educational television and how you could redirect television, which was largely comprised of big corporate dominated broadcast like NBC, ABC, and CBS, and then use it for different ends. Their vision goggles were about learning and things like that. The larger versions of technology like the "Knowledge Box." I mentioned earlier, that's kind of mainstream thinking today, the notion that most people learn through images. Back then maybe it was more containable than now with the internet. Now you think, "Oh my god, there are millions and billions of images, how could it all be handled?" But then I think that their archives, so to speak, were smaller and more containable. The idea that you might just be able to assimilate lots of imported images was just part of what was happening in the media. Life magazine and Look magazine were called picture magazines because they were largely photography-based and there were fewer words and articles. They have the same thing now with writing on the internet, right? The stories get shorter and shorter, there's more and more media and imagery. So these designers were anticipating what we have now as a normal everyday situation.
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As one of the fastest growing cities in the United States this year, Dallas is putting its hard-earned dollars right into the ground with several new buildings: A twisted, seven-story...

Arguably no other American city is as closely linked to music as Nashville. But until recently its downtown had no outdoor concert venue—just an endless string of honky-tonks. That changed dramatically this summer when the city opened the Ascend Amphitheater on its new 11-acre West Riverfront Park, a former brownfield site on the Cumberland River.

When Chicago’s newest public library branch opened on August 29, neighbors poured through the door like they were carrying overdue books. More than 6,500 people attended the opening day of the new Chicago Public Library building at 2100 South Wentworth Avenue in the city’s Chinatown neighborhood—a new record. Crowds have kept up since, attracting about 1,500 visitors per day.

Why all the fuss for a new neighborhood library? This one was unusual, most notably for deviating from the architectural prototype established by the Public Building Commission of Chicago under previous Mayor Richard M. Daley. It’s also somewhat of a detour for its designers, Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. In the present oeuvre of SOM’s work—from master-planning new cities...

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EVERYTHING IS (GETTING) BIGGER IN TEXAS
continued from front page

Kengo Kuma’s Rolex tower, which broke ground August 11 and opens late next year, will provide new office space for the luxury watchmaker. The building is located next to Rolex’s original headquarters at 2651 North Harwood Street and will have 136,857 square feet of interior space. Kuma is working with landscape architect Sadafumi Uchiyama to create a tiered, Japanese-inspired garden replete with stonewalls, reflecting pools, and fountains.

“Environment is an essential concept for the modern experience, incorporating both natural and urban surroundings,” said Kuma. “This landscape-building idea will result in a beautiful urban-organic icon.”

According to Gabriel Barbier-Mueller, founder and CEO of developer Harwood International, the Rolex Building will be the first building in Dallas to be designed by a Japanese architect.

Only a few blocks away, the McKinney & Olive tower by Cesar Pelli with executive architects Kendall/Heaton Associates broke ground June 19 of last year. The glass tower will rise 20 stories and fill a 3.1-acre site, making it one of the loftier buildings in the downtown neighborhood. The bottom levels will be primarily retail space with offices filling out the rest of the 530,000 square feet. There are also plans for a green roof and garden space at the street level.

Pelli has his sights set on downtown as well—his firm announced in September that it won the proposal to design the Shraman South Asian Museum, which will be the first museum in the U.S. exclusively devoted to South Asia. The 4.7-acre site at Woodall Rodgers Freeway and Field Street will join the Perot Museum of Nature and Science and Dallas Museum of Art as part of Museum Way.

City officials have been pushing hard to revitalize the downtown area as a destination for arts and culture, with the hope that this museum will help to build momentum, particularly after the Museum Tower fiasco these past couple of years. (The luxury apartment tower has received significant criticism after it was discovered that the light reflecting off of the facade is literally burning the art and plants on Renzo Piano’s Nasher Sculpture Center across the street. As of press time, there still isn’t an adequate solution to the glare.)

These buildings join major projects both under construction and under consideration. In tandem with the Rolex Tower, Harwood International is also building Bleu Ciel, a 33-story condominium complex uptown. On August 22, Santiago Calatrava’s $113 million Margaret McDermott Bridge over the Trinity River gained the first of its two 350-foot arches, and is expected to be complete in 2017. Meanwhile, in downtown multifamily complex Victory Park, four new proposed towers, including a 20-story tower—the tallest in that complex to date—are being discussed. No doubt, Dallas is a veritable boomtown.

Here’s hoping the newest buildings are successes rather than busts, or at least, don’t burn up anything. OLIVIA MARTIN
The Architect’s Newspaper October 21, 2015

**Steel Got It**

PNC is banking on downtown Pittsburgh with a new building it’s billing as the “world’s greenest.” The financial services giant already has three skyscrapers in its hometown. When it opened its fourth on October 1, the Steel City’s newest building, dubbed The Tower at PNC Plaza, became the tallest built downtown since 1988. And, according to its builders, it is also the city’s most efficient. The 33-story tower features a double-skin glass facade and a solar chimney that whisks fresh air through the building without a heavy-duty air handling system. Gary Paulson, PNC’s director of corporate real estate, tasked architects and engineers at Gensler, BuroHappold, and Paulson with bringing sustainable design techniques popular in Europe and East Asia back to the U.S.

Early in the project’s design, Hao Ko, a principal at Gensler, joined Paulson for a tour of high-rise high-rises across Europe. They hit seven cities in seven days, Ko said. The double-skin facade that emerged in the final design is a rarity in the States, but is more prevalent elsewhere. “We had a game of counting how many buildings just in Germany had double skins,” said Ko, who traded blows with Paulson each time they spotted one, adapting the backseat VW Beetle-hunting game “punch buggy.”

The resulting design leaves the small space between the building’s two facades open and inhabitable, in case employees want to take a phone call in what Paulson calls “no-man’s land.” Should they want a more expansive breather, however, the building’s 29th floor offers a terrace and “indoor park” with greenery and a radiant-heated floor. At those heights the facade switches to a six-story cable wall system to cut down on visual clutter and create a more immediate connection to the outdoors, said Gensler principal Ben Tranel, technical director on the project.

“We realized we created something that’s a unique experience,” Tranel said. “We wanted to feel the interaction and emotion of the facade switching to a controlled way. The stack idea of employee comfort. The project’s ultimate success would hang on whether employees want to work there. “You need to put a stake in the ground and try to exceed what anyone has done and what you’ve done before,” said Paulson. “And we’re hoping someone else exceeds what we’ve done.”

**Reading Rainbow** continued from front page in Asia to mocking up the University of Chicago’s successful bid to host President Barack Obama’s future presidential library—the 18,000-square-foot Chinatown library branch is a small project. But Chicago taxpayers were treated to the same thoughtful design as deep-pocketed developers, if the end product is any indication. SOM partner and lead designer Brian Lee said the design-build team, which also included suburban Chicago–based Wight & Company, started with a survey of existing buildings in the library system. The citywide prototype, with its clean lines and two-toned brick facade, was an efficient and handsome mold, Lee said, but Chinatown should be different.

“Obviously the idea of a prototype has some merit,” said Lee, “but buildings take their personality from the site and who’s going to be using them, and those specific social factors drive the design.”

The Chinatown site is a triangular island amid the high-traffic, northeastern node of the neighborhood, where the Red Line rumbles over Germak Road. Situated between the gate to “Old Chinatown” and the pedestrian mall of “New Chinatown,” the new curvilinear building beckons across the thoroughfares that surround it with a glass facade that prizes transparency.

In addition to serving as “a pivot point, a link between the two Chinatowns,” Lee said, the new library is also a space for community gatherings. Under an arched ceiling occlus, the building’s two-story atrium unfolds like a traditional Chinese courtyard with a curving stair that flows gently upward to the library’s second level. Vertical aluminum fins punctuate the glassy exterior, lowering glare and enabling an open-plan common area to get by with little artificial lighting. Textured ceiling panels and acoustical curtains hush noise without physically isolating library patrons.

At $19.1 million, the new building is only marginally more expensive than its peers. That tight budget meant the design team compromised clear glass for a tinted variety and scraped plans for a heat-and-power system that would have burned natural gas to power the building largely off the grid.

Even without those accoutrements, Lee said, it’s a smart library. Officials with the Public Building Commission “proposed some pretty innovative features,” including a water-based heating and cooling system. Brian Bannon, commissioner of Chicago Public Libraries, said it could be a harbinger of things to come—although the next projects on their docket are all renovations, not new buildings.

“Looking to the future, I think this was a great learning experience and shows how we can responsibly build a location- and context-focused building while managing cost,” said Bannon.

The building’s identity as a neighborhood hub got a boost from a mural by local artist CJ (Christopher) Hungerman. A vibrant mural, “Universal Transverse Immigration Proclamation,” was inspired by conversations with the Chinatown community. With neon hues and psychedelic strokes, it’s an unexpected abstraction of its surroundings and a welcome experimentation—just like the library that it calls home.

**Ad-Juy** continued from front page and philanthropist Linda Pace to Adjaye, his fame was still nascent. In 2007, Pace selected Adajaye to design her vision for an art museum called Ruby City that would be a beacon to San Antonio. Nearly a decade later, on September 17, the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio revealed the finalized plans for Ruby City—a two-story building clad in vibrant crimson precast concrete panels and large glass expanses.

“This building is going to come to fruition at an interesting time in his career,” said Kathryn Kanjo, a member of the Linda Pace Foundation’s Board of Trustees and chief curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. “I think how [Adajaye] is devoting his energies to this piece now that he is committed to many very impressive projects speaks to the friendship he had with Linda.”

Ruby City evolved out of a colored-pencil drawing Pace made from a dream she had of a beautiful, glowing red city. She shared the illustration with Adajaye when he visited San Antonio and he merged that vision with his take on the local architecture: a mixture of the nearby postmodern San Antonio Public Library by Ricardo Legorreta and the San Antonio Missions.

The resulting 14,000-square-foot museum “has a variety of spaces; each gallery feels like it is its own building and choreographs the viewer’s experience through the building,” said Kanjo. About 10,000 square feet will be devoted to three exhibition spaces and will house about 5 percent of the foundation’s collection, including large sculpture and video installations. Although roughly rectangular, the faceted roofline feels like a “gathering of forms” and oversize windows look out to the city and San Pedro Creek. Visitors will enter the structure from the west side facing the creek with views of the one acre green space, as well as a sculpture garden on the south side of the property with terraced banks leading down to the water.

Coincidentally, the San Pedro Creek is currently undergoing a major restoration by the city—there are plans to transform the areas along the creek into a public park with pedestrian and bicycle paths. Ruby City is slated to break ground in 2016 and open in 2018, coinciding with San Antonio’s 300th birthday.

**PITTSBURGH’S NEWEST TOWER AIMS TO BE ITS GREENEST**

The 33-story tower has a double-skin facade and operable “poppers.” A terrace and “indoor park” offer expansive greenery and a radiant-heated floor. At those heights the facade switches to a six-story cable wall system to cut down on visual clutter and create a more immediate connection to the outdoors, said Genser principal Ben Tranel, technical director on the project.

We realized we created something that’s a unique experience,” Tranel said. “Looking out through a really transparent facade and feeling very connected to nature.”

Inside, outside air is encouraged to flow between open windows and the building’s central cavity and custom furniture from Haworth leaves the office floor open. Heat accumulates on the building’s roof, which is painted black, pulling air through a so-called solar chimney.

To fine-tune that concept, the designers built an inhabitable mock-up of one of the tower’s floors in a parking lot in suburban Green Tree, Pennsylvania. That model led to changes in the coloration of the blinds and other details, assuring Ko and other designers that their building would have a light airiness instead of a stack of whirlwinds.

We wanted people to feel it, and get that little sensation of cool air coming across your face and your body,” said Ko, adding, “That’s actually harder to do in a controlled way.”

The stack effect, which describes how air rushes out from high-rise buildings, worked against the idea of employee comfort. And according to the client, comfort—not efficiency—was the primary goal. The Tower at PNC Plaza uses about half as much energy as a traditional office building and less than a quarter as much water, according to PNC, but Gary Paulson said the project’s ultimate success would hang on whether employees want to work there. “You need to put a stake in the ground and try to exceed what anyone has done and what you’ve done before,” said Paulson. “And we’re hoping someone else exceeds what we’ve done.”